



Cathy's Message

June is such an incredible month, people have flowers out and are going on vacations. I just love this time of year. People are happy and you can hear the laughter in their voices. I think June brings us all back to our school summer vacations and the joy we felt on the last day of school.

Szymanski's have been busy over the past couple of months working on new products and offerings. We would love to know what products you would like us to sell or support.

I would also love to hear what kind of articles you would like to see in the newsletter. Would you like to see an article about one of the company's we work with and what they are doing with technology? Let me know and I will work on this for you.

We work with the most amazing people and are so fortunate to have what we feel is the greatest staff possible. If they give you a **WOW** experience please let me know. I love to give them compliments.



Please check out our referral program on page three. We love referrals, and we love giving money

to non-profits.

Are you following us on Facebook? Please like our page at www.facebook.com/szycom

We hope you know how much we appreciate each and everyone of you.

Take care and have the best day ever.
Cathy & David.



Five Mistakes To Avoid When Investing In IT

As a small or medium sized business owner, you likely have your hands full. Between managing your staff, looking for growth opportunities and keeping clients happy, you probably have little time to dedicate to new technology purchases. Being so busy, it can be easy to make a mistake when choosing an IT solution. That's why we've compiled a list of common IT investment missteps that every business owner needs to avoid.

Investing in the newest technology Instead of the best fit

It's the job of every marketer to make you believe the newest technology on the market will resolve all your problems. And while the latest cloud or virtualization offering is likely to make things better for many individuals and organizations, it isn't going to work for everyone.

Don't let the **flash and hype** of a new product deceive you. Take the time to think about the results you're trying to achieve with technology. Make a list of them, and when you're done match those criteria with the product that fits. Any good IT provider will be happy to serve as your consultant to ensure you make the best choice.

Believing everything will work together

As technology evolves, it is inevitably becoming simpler to use. Because of this belief that all products are going to be plug-and-play, many business owners hold the misguided assumption that any new technology they implement is automatically going to **synchronize with their other IT**. It is simply not true.

Though many technologies are compatible with one another, your business is taking a big risk - that **could result in downtime** and wasted money - if you implement a new tool that doesn't integrate well into your current system and workflow. Be smart, do some research or consult with an IT professional before making a purchase.

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Scotty's Perspective



When I comes to your children, it's hard enough worrying about the bully down the street, let alone the entire world which is at their fingertips. This is my ten year old daughter **Hannah**, soon to be eleven. She is learning a little responsibility by taking on the task of folding these very newsletters.

I am also going to be teaching her how to use the internet responsibly, but as children grow curious, they don't always do what we teach them. There are many tools available to keep you children away from adult or even **malicious content on the internet**, but built right into Windows we have Parental Controls, along with Family Safety Filter.

With Parental Controls, you can restrict what time they are able to be logged into their PC, or allow or block specific programs and games. This works well, but what about the internet? This is where the Family Safety Filter comes in. This feature is a part of Windows live which is usually installed on Windows PCs. If it isn't, it can be downloaded **from Microsoft for free**. You can classify how restrictive you want to be and have websites blocked from your child. Then when they try to access questionable material, you can receive an email on your smart phone, browse the site yourself, and finally allow it or block it. This gives you the choice of what they can access on the internet. You can also view an activity report to see what sites they have been visiting.

So if you are worried about internet content with your **children**, try Parental Controls and Family Safety built right into Windows, or call your favorite Szymanski Advisor for assistance. by **Scott Cravener**

Three “Gotchas” Most IT Pros Won’t Tell You When Selling You Their Cloud Solution

Are you using any cloud applications to store data? Then listen up! There are a few “gotchas” you need to know about 3rd-party cloud apps that most sales reps will NEVER tell you.

1. **They aren’t responsible for keeping a backup of your data.** If you read the small print of your contract, you’ll see that in every way possible, your cloud provider is NOT responsible for data loss or backups – even if it’s their fault. In fact, Office 365 will only keep 3 days’ backup of your data; so if you delete or overwrite a file and don’t notice it until 4-5 days later, it’s GONE. If your data is important, you need to implement a backup solution that works with cloud applications.
2. **What you see may NOT be what you get.** There’s nothing more frustrating than an incredibly slow application when you’re trying to work; and the salesperson demo’ing the application or platform is going to make sure you only see the BEST-case scenarios for performance. But there are a lot of things that can determine how fast your cloud applications run, such as the file size you’re working on, CPUs and RAM and storage, time of day, day of the week, your Internet connection and the number of users accessing the application. Make sure you get some verification of the speed in YOUR specific environment before spending a lot of money, time and aggravation moving to a new cloud application.
3. **What if they cancel you?** Here’s a scary situation: what if your cloud provider decides to shut down your account because they go out of business or simply decide not to service you anymore? Or what if YOU want out? Make sure you have in writing what happens if YOU cancel your contract AND what your cloud provider can and cannot do if they go out of business, cancel your account or have any other issues that would cause service interruption. Moving a network from a cloud platform is NOT a simple task and you need to make sure you can get your data and that you’ll be given sufficient time to make the transition.

Need help interpreting any of these scenarios? Give us a call at 814-240-1454 and we’ll help you put in place a solid “Plan B” for any of the above issues.

Refer Our Services

We love having you as a customer and, quite honestly, wish we had more like you! So instead of just wishing, we’ve decided to hold a special “refer a friend” event during the month of May.

Simply refer any company with ten (10) or more computers to our office to receive a FREE Network Checkup (a \$497 value). Once we’ve completed our initial appointment with your referral, **we’ll donate \$100 to your favorite charity** for every referral that you’ve sent, as a small thank-you for thinking of us.



How To Make Yourself Invisible To Hackers

There’s an old joke about two men hiking in the woods when they come across a big, grumpy black bear. Scared silly, one of the guys starts to run but notices his buddy stopped, bent-over, changing his shoes. He shouts to him, “Dude! What are you doing?!?! Why aren’t you running?” to which his friend replies, “I’m changing my shoes because I don’t need to outrun the bear – I only need to outrun YOU.”

This is a perfect analogy for what’s going on in small businesses: the “slow,” easy targets are getting nailed by fast-growing cybercrime rings that are getting more sophisticated and aggressive in attacking small businesses. Last year, the average cyber-attack cost a small business \$20,752, a substantial increase from 2013, when the average was \$8,699. That’s because most small businesses don’t have the security protocols in place or the manpower and budget to implement sophisticated security systems. While there’s absolutely no way to completely protect yourself other than disconnecting entirely from the Internet, there are several things you can do to avoid being easy pickings. Here’s how:

1. **Lock your network.** While WIRED networks make you invisible to Wi-Fi snoops because you have to access them by plugging into physical outlets or hacking modem ports, you can create a hidden or cloaked network on a wireless network. Simply disable the service set identifier (SSID) broadcasting function on the wireless router, and only users with the exact network name will have access. Small businesses like coffeehouses can also do this—just periodically change the network’s information and place a small sign near the register with the current network name and passcode.
2. **Encrypt your data.** On your desktops, turn on the full-disk encryption tools that come standard on most operating systems: BitLocker on Windows-based PCs and FileVault on Macs. There is no noticeable performance lag; however, the encryption only applies when users are logged out of the system. So setting computers to automatically log out after 15 minutes without use is a good idea. And for mobile devices, use a VPN (virtual private network) to encrypt data traveling to and from your mobile devices and limit your employees’ access to only the company data that they must have to do their jobs.
3. **Install firewall and anti-malware applications** on all of your equipment, including mobile devices.
4. **Disable features that automatically connect your mobile devices to any available network.**
5. **Disable printer and file-sharing options on mobile devices before connecting to a hotspot.**
6. **Check before connecting to hotspots.** If there is an unusual variation in the logo or name on the login page, beware...this could mean it’s a fake hotspot designed to steal your data.

Can you guarantee that the person across the hotel lobby isn’t looking at your data? Not really, but the chances of them being able to do that are greatly reduced if you take precautions to protect your business.

Four Ways To Get More Performance, Productivity And Profit From Your Team

1. Your Team Needs To Learn Together

Rarely do teams learn together. Too often, increases in skill are confined to individuals. Sometimes that can become a barrier to teamwork: because there are dramatically different knowledge and skill levels, some team members aren't able to keep up. When an individual attends a course or discovers a useful practice, he or she should be encouraged to share it with the team. And periodically putting the entire team into a learning environment is critical.

2. Peer Recognition Is Powerful

If you're a team leader, understand that despite your best efforts, you will be incapable of adequately recognizing every team member's efforts and contributions. Good work will slip by and go unrecognized. If this happens often, the team member may well become disillusioned. Relieve yourself of the burden to be the sole dispenser of recognition: ask team members to recognize each other. Make it a team expectation to thank other team members for their assistance and to look for opportunities to catch each other doing something praiseworthy.

3. To Win More Together, Think Together More

Have you ever held a team retreat? When was the last time your team came together for the express purpose of thinking about the work you do? Do you periodically pause as a group to reflect on what you've learned and internalize the lessons? Do you meet to consider opportunities, and not just to solve problems? The team that thinks more wins more.

4. You've Got To Expect It And Not Tolerate It If You Don't Get It

Some managers, knowing how difficult it can be to create great teamwork, undermine their efforts by making teamwork "optional." That is, they appreciate the people who are good team players but they tolerate those who aren't. As the old adage goes, what you allow, you condone. Those on the same team should know that figuring out how to get along and work with other teammates is their responsibility. Those who refuse to be team players should at the very least not enjoy the same benefits, and at worst, should be removed. It might sound harsh, but it is necessary if you want teamwork to work.

Three 'Time Saving' Excel Shortcuts

1. Pressing "Alt" will display shortcut letters to the Ribbon menus and after pressing a shortcut key, further shortcuts will appear.
2. Inputting same data in multiple cells is easy: Hold "Ctrl", select the cells you want to contain the same data, type the text you want, Press Ctrl + 'Enter' BAM... You got it.
3. Automatic sum function will appear at the bottom of the selected cells, after pressing 'Alt' +=.

Five Mistakes To Avoid When Investing In IT

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Assuming your team doesn't need support and training

Now that you've found the perfect fit technology and you're sure it will integrate into your current IT setup, you go ahead and purchase it. You let out a sigh of relief as you kick back and let your sparkly new IT solution power your company to new levels of success and profits in a SMB "happily ever after" fantasy. Sound too good to be true? That's probably because it usually is.

Don't forget that not all of your employees are going to instinctively know how to use the new technology. Consult with your IT provider to see if they offer support and training. If not, you may want to look elsewhere or find an alternative solution before you buy.

Forgetting to create a budget

More and more IT solutions are packaged with pay-as-you-go monthly pricing. While this is a great way to help you avoid large **upfront capital investment**, if you implement too many different technologies too fast - and without thinking about the recurring costs - you could quickly run out of money before having properly created a complete technology platform.

Think about what you're comfortable spending on IT before you open your wallet. Do some research, and either draft a budget on your own or acquire the assistance of a consultant to help you along.

Failing to get staff input

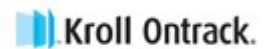
It's wise to consult with the employees who will be using the new technology you implement, on a daily basis. It's even wiser to do it before you purchase it.

The truth is that not all of your employees may be on board with the new product. They may actually even know some downsides to it you weren't aware of. Regardless, it's smart to consult with them beforehand, or you may find yourself in a constant fight getting them to adopt it.

Need to consult with an IT professional to create a complete technology solution for your business? We're happy to serve you in any way possible. Call Cathy today at 814-240-1454 or email at cathy@szy.com

Useless Trivia

- 315 entries in Webster's 1996 Dictionary were misspelled.
- Ketchup was sold in the 1830s as medicine.
- The sound of E.T. walking was made by someone squishing their hands in jelly.
- Rubber bands last longer when refrigerated.
- A cat has 32 muscles in each ear.
- An ostrich's eye is bigger than its brain
- Tigers have striped skin, not just striped fur.
- A shrimp's heart is in its head.



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